

Lady Generals deny Mustangs for third time

BY RUSTY BRYAN

Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Even the departure of their star player with 10 minutes to go couldn't stop the Heidelberg Lady Generals from claiming their third straight U.S. Forces Europe championship with a 78-69 victory over Mannheim.

Tiffany Collins, who scored 25 points and collected 19 rebounds in the game's first 30 minutes, left to fulfill a commitment to play in a league game with a German team. But Heidelberg, leading 63-46 at the time, had enough talent and defensive presence to hold off the Lady Mustangs.

Heidelberg improved to 43-2 with an unbeaten run through this four-day event matching the top two USAREUR teams against their USAFE counterparts.

"At that point in the game, with that margin, you use clock management, defense and rebounding," Heidelberg coach Joe Souza said.

The Lady Generals did, but that didn't stop old-foe Mannheim — whom Heidelberg has beaten the last two seasons for the USAREUR crown and the last three for the U.S. Forces Europe title — from making a run.

Laura Morant scored eight of her 17 points in the final 10 minutes, and Tonya Weaver hit a three-pointer with 40 seconds left in the game to get the Lady Mustangs to within 72-65, as close as they'd been since the early going. They'd get no closer.

"I thought we had good spacing on offense to run out the clock," Souza said, adding that having point guard Vanessa McClendon in control was "just like having me on the court to run the offense."



RAYMOND T. CONWAY/Stars and Stripes

Heidelberg's Tiffany Collins, center, outmuscles Mannheim's Sharon Montgomery, left, and Laura Morant for a rebound during Sunday's title game.

McClendon and old pro Rhonda Williams, who was playing her final game for the Lady Generals, kept the game in hand with deliberate, intelligent play. But points were harder to come by than when Collins was dominating the action.

"It was another game, definitely, after she left," said Heidelberg's Katina Miles, a three-point specialist who sank three en route to a 14-point outing. "When she's gone, we've got to look for other ways to score."

Williams (12 points) shot 5-for-8 from the foul line in the final 10 minutes, and McClendon went 4-for-6 from the line and totaled 11 points.

Precious Blackman scored 25 points for Mannheim, but she missed four tries from the floor in the late going — three of them three-point shots — as Mannheim lost to Heidelberg for the seventh time in eight tries this season.

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USFE championships

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Results of the four-day U.S. Forces Europe basketball championships, pitting the top two men's and women's teams from USAFE and USAREUR:

Women

Thursday

Heidelberg (Army 1) 79, U.K. (Air Force 2) 56

Mannheim (Army 2) 83, Ramstein (Air Force 1) 78

Friday

Heidelberg 78, Mannheim 68

Saturday

Ramstein 59, U.K. 34

Mannheim 75, Ramstein 59

Sunday

Championship

Heidelberg 78, Mannheim 59

Halftime — Heidelberg Lady Generals, 45; Mannheim Lady Mustangs 34.

Scoring — Heidelberg: Tiffany Collins 25, Katina Miles 14, Rhonda Williams 12, Vanessa McClendon 11, Tina Barnes 10, Karolina Karkowicz 4, Patrice Jameson 2; Mannheim: Precious Blackman 25, Laura Morant 17, Dee Holmes 12, Tonya Weaver 9, Sharon Montgomery 5.

USFE All-Stars

(As voted by coaches and officials)

Tiffany Collins, Rhonda Williams and Katina Miles, Heidelberg; Precious Blackman and Sharon Montgomery, Mannheim; Lakesha Fullwood, Nichole Howard and Carrie Pederson, Ramstein, and Jeni Fears and Alexis Knight, U.K.

Thursday

Aviano (Air Force 2) 93, Heidelberg (Army 1) 87

Ramstein (Air Force 1) 80, Mannheim (Army 2) 66

Friday

Ramstein 77, Aviano 48

Saturday

Heidelberg 108, Mannheim 95

Heidelberg 89, Aviano 87

Sunday

Championship

Ramstein 84, Heidelberg 82

Halftime — Heidelberg Generals 50, Ramstein Rams 35.

Scoring — Ramstein: Kenny Beak 17, Gel-michael Kelly 16, Phylon Grice 12, Brandon LeBlanc 12, Robert Batiste 11, Troy Adams 8, Austin Livion 4, Ricky Patton 4, Chris Adams 2; Heidelberg: Chris Hood and Hans-Joerg Stewert, Aviano, and Will Tompkins, Mannheim.